



Spring 2019  
VOLUME 29 ISSUE 2

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# AMBS window

## Journey: A real-life story

### Leadership development program meets participants where they are

**T**housands of miles from their homeland, a group of about 30 South Sudanese women gathers on Tuesdays in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Meeting in each other's homes, they pray for their war-torn country and its people, share about their lives and study the Bible together. **Rebecca Riek**, who came to Canada from South Sudan 16 years ago, helped start the group in 2007 and continues to lead it.

"In my country we are 64 tribes," she explained. "The two largest tribes started fighting, and it has affected all the people of South Sudan. They've become enemies."

Riek's group is intentionally intertribal, bringing together people whose families have experienced years of civil war — both when Sudan was one country (before South Sudan's independence in 2011) and also since South Sudan's civil war began in December 2013. About 400 South Sudanese families now live in Kitchener-Waterloo, a culturally diverse community of around 300,000 people, Riek said. Tensions between tribes in South Sudan can carry over into immigrants' lives in Canada, but Riek's group

works to redefine those relationships.

"We try to just talk about peace, love, unity and Christ," she said, noting that the group is also interdenominational. "We don't have to talk about siding with our tribe. It's working, and it is growing in numbers. It's not only Bible study; it's also like a healing program."

Riek has found support for exploring her call to ministry and leadership through AMBS's **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program**, which she joined in the fall of 2017. The two-and-a-half-year distance-friendly certificate program — designed to develop leaders centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities — includes an undergraduate-level online curriculum, biweekly meetings with a mentor, and one or two Weekend Learning Events on or near AMBS's campus each year.

"The program is opening a new door for my life now," Riek said, "especially a spiritual part of my life, especially in terms of knowledge about who Mennonites are and where they started, because I was wondering how come I connected with the Mennonite Church.

"I kept thinking, 'Yes, God is calling me, but where am I going to start?' But now God is putting it all together. Journey is like a journey with God. It's not just a name; it's a real-life story for me."

Riek learned about Journey in January 2017 while attending an AMBS Pastors Week focused on intercultural congregations. Her friend **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld** (MDiv 1981) had organized a diverse group of people from their church, First Mennonite in Kitchener, to go. After hearing about Journey from **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker**, AMBS Dean of Lifelong Learning, Riek was immediately interested and talked to Yoder Neufeld about applying.

Riek did wonder how her speaking English as a third language would affect her involvement, while Yoder Neufeld was concerned about the time commitment for Riek, who works full time (*continued*)

**Above:** Rebecca Riek (second row, second from left) and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld (next to her) among fellow participants in the September 2018 Journey Weekend Learning Event at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Michigan. **Credit:** Jason Bryant

# JOURNEY: A REAL-LIFE STORY (continued)

as a personal support worker for people with brain injuries and part time at a retirement home, in addition to parenting six children, ministering in her South Sudanese community and volunteering at First Mennonite. Riek said, though, that joining Journey was the right decision.

"I was surrounded by a lot of people and by love," Riek said. "People pushing behind me, left and right they were telling me, 'You'll be alright, Rebecca.' When you feel somebody supporting you, you are always willing to do it."

As Riek's Journey mentor, Yoder Neufeld said she has been inspired by getting to know her at a deeper level.

"We already had a friendship, but doing this together and driving seven hours to Indiana and back together has given me a wonderful opportunity to deepen that relationship and to be inspired both by Rebecca and by the whole Journey group when we go to the Weekend Learning Events," she said.

Yoder Neufeld has been active for many years in bridge-building roles, serving as a pastor of Hispanic ministry at First Mennonite in Kitchener, working with refugees, doing immigration advocacy, and serving as interpretation coordinator for Mennonite World Conference. She's currently retired and enjoys tending to intercultural relationships at First Mennonite. Even though the Journey course material isn't new to her, for the most part, Yoder Neufeld said it has been good to review. She and Riek also both

appreciate the diversity of cultures, professions and backgrounds represented by the Journey participants.

Because of Yoder Neufeld and Riek's close spiritual work together, they asked to preach together at First Mennonite. The process of preparing a joint sermon that respected each of their preaching styles was a rich experience, Yoder Neufeld said. Riek's seven-year-old son, Isaiah, had also asked if he could lead a prayer with the children, which he did wonderfully, she added, and a feedback group the two had organized was very positive about Riek's leadership that Sunday.

Yoder Neufeld said, "When Rebecca and I debriefed that later, she said, 'You know, what matters is not the compliments; what matters is whether people actually heard the message about prayer and whether it made a difference in their lives.' That to me was also a strong signal that she was clear that this was not about her, but about the message that God wanted to give the congregation. To me that was one of the rich fruits of all of this."

Yoder Neufeld also added that being able to talk freely about cultural differences with Riek has contributed to her intercultural ministry at First Mennonite: "Learning from Rebecca about appropriate and inappropriate ways to relate to African culture — not that all African cultures are the same — and hearing more about her own life have helped me to be more equipped to come alongside other African women in our congregation."

## Journey by the numbers

Participants enrolled in September 2018: **17**  
(up from **6** in the prior year)

Men: **11**; Women: **6**

States/provinces represented:  
**California, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Ontario, Wisconsin**

Home countries represented:  
**Belize, Bhutan, Canada, Congo, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan, United States**

Religious affiliations represented:  
Mennonite: **14**  
Lutheran: **1**  
Missionary Church: **1**  
Pentecostal: **1**



Riek recommended anyone feeling a call to ministry or church leadership to find out more about Journey, complimenting Yoder Neufeld as her mentor, the course instructors and the AMBS staff she has interacted with at the Weekend Learning Events.

"When I come back here," Riek said, "I feel I went for vacation, talked with God and came back full of the Holy Spirit, refreshed to start all over again. It's a beautiful program." •

— Marlys Weaver-Stoesz for AMBS

## AMBS Window Spring 2019 Volume 29 Issue 2

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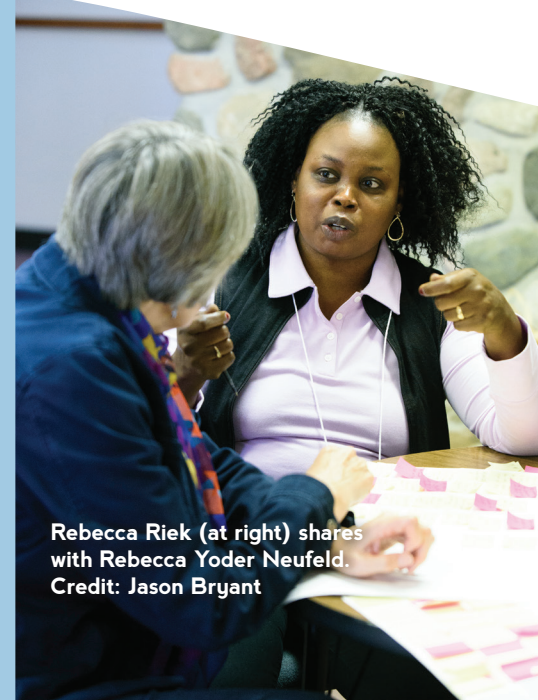
A seminary of  
Mennonite Church USA and  
Mennonite Church Canada

## Is Journey for you?

**H**ave you wished for mentors and companions as you follow a call to ministry? In the Journey program, learners and their mentors explore spiritual leadership together in their own context. Whether you're an active congregational member, pastor, church planter or lay leader, Journey can support your growth.

Learners follow an online curriculum focused on spiritual disciplines, theological and biblical studies, character development, mentoring and community, gifts development, and leadership skills.

While Journey represents an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective, the program is open to people of any (or no) denomination. Register by Aug. 6 and save \$100. Learn more: **ambs.edu/journey** •



Rebecca Riek (at right) shares with Rebecca Yoder Neufeld. Credit: Jason Bryant





## Creating connections — near and far



**Michael Unruh is an MDiv Connect student from Wichita, Kansas. He serves as Executive Director of Camp Mennoscah (a Mennonite camp near Murdock, Kansas) and attends Hope Mennonite in Wichita.**

Throughout several points in my life, I have sensed a calling to ministry. What began as a simple comment by a member of my church led to working with youth for several summers at Camp Mennoscah, adding a youth ministry certificate onto my undergraduate degree, and eventually to seminary study at AMBS.

Because my undergraduate major was biology, I felt that I lacked the training, not to mention the vocabulary and language, to really fit in with the seminary community. I was relieved to discover that AMBS faculty and other students took in my background and perspective as a valuable part of the community, and I recognized that I was doing the same for them. We meet one another where we are at. Though it's not always perfect to share intense discussion with people from a host of backgrounds, it is beautiful.

After beginning seminary in Elkhart, I ended up taking a full-time job at Camp

Mennoscah back in Kansas. AMBS has extended theological education to me through the MDiv Connect program. It has been such a blessing to continue my education and remain connected to the AMBS community.

**Karen Mascho earned a Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies from AMBS in May 2018. She's now on the pastoral team of Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City.**

My husband, Steve, and I went from knowing very little about Mennonites to planting a church in Texas in 15 short months. At the suggestion of our conference minister, we enrolled in AMBS's Pastoral Studies Distance Education program. That began our formal education in Mennonite studies. It was such a blessing to have instructors with whom I could discuss ideas and ask questions.

Soon the MDiv Connect program began, and I enrolled. Coming to campus for classes expanded not only my horizons but also my mind. LEAP (Leadership Education in Anabaptist



Perspective, an orientation course) helped me know myself and taught me about other ways of thinking. AMBS's warm and accepting culture helped me feel free to explore new ideas. Theologically, my studies confirmed my pacifist beliefs and provided the necessary biblical foundation that enabled me to discuss them with others.

Due to my husband's health demands, I switched to the Certificate program. (Steve passed away in February 2018.)

AMBS is a place where I regularly met God. Chapel services, class discussions, devotional time, potlucks, talent shows and walking the labyrinth all provided elements of divine fellowship. This was a perfect model of the culture I want to foster in the church, and the examples and instruction I received there will help me in doing so. •

**Above: Rachelle Luitjens, a 2018 MDiv Connect alumna from Olds, Iowa, plays Connect Four with her sons. Rachelle completed part of her degree at a distance while pastoring and parenting. Credit: Vada Snider. Inset images: Jason Bryant**

## Design your own course of study — from anywhere in the world

**A** MBS's fully online **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** is designed to provide church leaders, bivocational pastors and other professionals with a foundation in theological and biblical study, spiritual enrichment, and fuller integration of Christian faith into their work and ministry. Students can develop a plan of study tailored to their interests in consultation with an assigned advisor.

The 27-credit-hour certificate offers a flexible, multi-

year schedule. Students who are able to come to AMBS for campus and hybrid courses may be able to complete the certificate in less time. Students may transfer up to 12 credit hours from other accredited seminaries and can apply their AMBS credits toward completion of a full degree. Learn more: [ambs.edu/certificate](https://ambs.edu/certificate)

Building on the online Graduate Certificate, the AMBS faculty is at work designing a fully online MA in theology and global Anabaptism. •



## Equipping church and business leaders across the globe

As a Christian professional, I practiced finance and organizational consultancy work with churches and faith-based organizations for more than 20 years. My work experience revealed that several of these organizations faced leadership and integrity challenges. This awareness informs my passionate desire to facilitate leadership education centered in Christ's peace for Anabaptist communities in Africa.

As a practicing church minister [with a major responsibility to help equip the Mennonite church leadership in Kenya], my desire is to gain authentic Bible-rooted and Christ-centered peace theology that is responsive to Kenya Mennonite Church's mission field challenges. Conflict and violence are the most challenging issues facing our congregants. I therefore feel that Anabaptist-Mennonites' integrative peace-centered approach to doing theology offers the most competent response to my

African mission field context. I settled on seeking admission to AMBS after reviewing several Anabaptist-oriented learning institutions in North America. • — **Patrick James Obonde** of Nairobi, Kenya, is a Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies student.



(l. to r.): Talashia Keim Yoder, MA in Christian Formation student from Goshen, Indiana; Marcos Acosta, MDiv student from Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Patrick James Obonde during orientation week in August 2018. Credit: Peter Ringenberg

## Grad students at AMBS

Enrolled in September 2018: **98**

International (outside of the U.S. and Canada): **21** (the highest number since AMBS began keeping record)  
Canadian: **6**  
U.S.: **71**

Women: **54**; Men: **44**

Mennonite or Anabaptist-related: **77**  
Identifying with other backgrounds: **21**

Students by program

- Master of Divinity: **57** (of these, **25** are in the MDiv Connect program)
- Master of Arts degrees: **16**
- Graduate Certificate: **4**
- Nonadmitted students: **21** (includes **9** visiting students from other institutions)

Enrolled in an online course: **40**  
U.S. states represented by online students: **15**

Countries represented by online students: **Canada, Colombia, Kenya, South Africa, U.S., Zambia**

Living on campus: **30** students, **9** family members, **4** employees/volunteers  
Continents represented by students living on campus: **6** (all but Antarctica!)



## Anabaptist Witness

### Engaging the church in conversations on mission

**Anabaptist Witness** is a biannual journal focused on mission studies and published collaboratively by AMBS, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. and Canada, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Mission Network. Launched in October 2014, the journal is available for purchase in print and for free online.

The issues are themed, and so far we've covered a wide variety of topics in relation to mission: Anabaptist identity, theology of religions, food, the nature of mission, gender, the Holy Spirit, suffering, creation, and global partnerships. In April 2019 we'll publish our 10th issue, on mission in conflict zones. Upcoming issues treat migration, worship, and Indigenous peoples and land.

In our mission statement, we describe the journal as "a dialogue on key issues

facing the church in mission." The dialogical or conversational nature of the journal comes through in the diversity of voices included in the journal and on the companion blog — in terms of gender, nationality, and church and agency affiliation. We also regularly publish in Spanish, French and other languages, and we sometimes include responses to articles in the journal itself or on the blog.

We'd love to add your voice to the conversation! We publish academic articles, reflection pieces by practitioners, sermons, poetry, artwork, book and film reviews, and blog posts, so there are many ways to get involved. Get in touch with us at [www.anabaptistwitness.org](http://www.anabaptistwitness.org). •

— **Jamie Pitts**, Ph.D., Anabaptist Witness Editor; Director, Institute of Mennonite Studies. Photo credit: Peter Ringenberg



## 2019 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition

### AL FUERTES; ROGER AND CYNTHIA NEUFELD SMITH



**Al Fuyertes**  
Credit: Irene Girsang

**A**l Fuyertes of Fairfax, Virginia, a professor with a focus on peacebuilding and conflict transformation in war zones, and **Roger and Cynthia Neufeld Smith** of Jackson, Mississippi, former pastors at Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, Kansas, are the 2019 recipients of

AMBS's Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. The annual award honors alumni with an outstanding record of faithful ministry and service.

Al earned a Master of Arts: Peace Studies (MAPS) in 1997, and Roger and Cynthia earned Master of Divinity degrees in 1986 and 1989, respectively.

"This year's award recipients represent the exemplary service we note in the ministry of so many AMBS alumni — in congregational roles as well as academic, peacemaking and mission roles," noted AMBS Alumni Director **Janeen Bertsche Johnson**, M.Div. "Cynthia and Roger, in their 30 years of ministry in one congregation, have shown the fruits of long-term relationships and steady leadership. Al, as a teacher and practitioner of peacemaking in the United States, the Philippines and many other places, is influencing hundreds of people to work for peace and justice in communities that have experienced devastating conflict."

Originally from Surigao City, Philippines, Al worked from 1991 to 1995 as a resident pastor with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in an ongoing war zone. **Ed Martin**, then regional coordinator for Southeast Asia for Mennonite Central Committee, visited him in 1995 and, after hearing about his work, offered him a full scholarship to earn a master's degree in peace studies. Al began studying at AMBS in 1995, having chosen the seminary largely because of

**Ted and Gayle Gerber Koontz**, AMBS faculty members (now retired) who had been his professors at the Silliman University Divinity School in Dumaguete City, Philippines, where he earned a Bachelor of Theology in 1990.

"Having been in a war zone for five years prior to coming to AMBS, I was overwhelmed and consumed by so much anger at the Philippine government and Philippine army for human atrocities and all kinds of injustices, militarization and oppression committed against Filipino people," he said.

Al credits AMBS with introducing him to peace studies and peacebuilding, naming "memorable and life-changing courses" taught by the Koontzes as well as now retired professors **Mary Schertz** and **Daniel Schipani**. He also recalled the vibrant and supportive learning community and noted that he has continued relationships from his AMBS cohort, collaborating on projects around the world.

In 2007, Al earned a Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax. Now an associate professor at GMU's School of Integrative Studies, he focuses his work and teaching on intercultural and interreligious dialogue, cross-cultural experiential learning, conflict resolution and transformation, human trafficking and smuggling, community-based trauma healing, and refugee and internal displacement, among other fields.

"I am who and where I am today partly because of AMBS through MCC," he said.

**Roger and Cynthia** not only experienced spiritual and academic growth during their time at AMBS, but also met each other while studying at the seminary, marrying in the AMBS chapel in 1987.

Originally from northwestern Ohio, Cynthia earned her bachelor's degree in music from Bluffton College (now University) in 1976, taught public school music, and then earned her master's degree in music theory from Bowling Green State



**Cynthia and Roger Neufeld Smith**  
Credit: Jakob Seiferth

University in 1982. Feeling unsatisfied with her life and uncertain about what to do next, she came to AMBS in the fall of 1984 "for a year of discernment." She took organ and piano lessons while at AMBS and ended up focusing her MDiv studies on worship and music. She earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in church music from the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 2000.

Roger, who grew up in central Kansas, graduated from Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He worked four years as a youth pastor at his home congregation, First Mennonite Church in Newton, and one year as a research chemist in Wichita, Kansas, before testing the "seminary waters" by enrolling in January interterm classes at AMBS in 1981 and 1982.

"As I moved into a leadership role with our church's young adult group and lived in a household that aspired to be an intentional Christian community, I realized that I needed more biblical background and pastoral skills to be a ministry leader," he said. "Though I still had doubts about pastoral ministry as a profession [after the interterm classes], I decided to enroll full time at AMBS to learn how to be a Christian minister."

Roger said his professors helped him gain the biblical grounding and pastoral skills he's used throughout his ministry. *(continued on p. 7)*

# ALUMNI NEWS

## ALUMNI NEWS NOTES DEGREE ABBREVIATIONS

- BDiv: Bachelor of Divinity
- BTh: Bachelor of Theology
- MACF: Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- MAPS: Master of Arts: Peace Studies
- MATS: Master of Arts: Theological Studies
- MDiv: Master of Divinity
- “Alum” designates those who completed 12 or more credit hours but did not earn a degree.

## STAY CONNECTED!

The AMBS Alumni Facebook Group features news about our alumni:

[facebook.com/groups/ambsalumni](https://facebook.com/groups/ambsalumni)

If you have updates to share, send them to [jbjohnson@ambs.edu](mailto:jbjohnson@ambs.edu) or post them directly in the Alumni Facebook Group.

## ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

**Grant Miller**, a Master of Divinity student from Goshen, Indiana, has received the Alumni Scholarship for the 2018–19 academic year. Thank you to the alumni who contributed and are supporting Grant in his studies!

**Weldon Nisly** (MAPS 1977) of Seattle recently went with Christian Peacemaker Teams to Palestine and Iraqi Kurdistan.

**Daniel Liechty** (MAPS 1978), Professor in the School of Social Work at Illinois State University, received the honorary title Distinguished Lecturer in Arts and Sciences — the highest honor given within ISU’s College of Arts and Sciences.

**Donald Stoesz** (MDiv 1981) published *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers’ Use of Scripture: 1874–1977* (FriesenPress, 2018).

**Janet Bergen** (alum) was named Executive Director of Care Services at Menno Place in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

**Richard Gehring** (MDiv 1991) had a sermon, “Nevertheless, She Persisted,” published in *Preaching as Resistance* (Chalice Press, 2018).

**Glenn D. Stevens** (MATS 1991) retired from an interim pastorate at Hollins Road Church of the Brethren in Roanoke, Virginia, and does occasional pulpit supply.

**Brian Dyck** (MDiv 1992) was named a distinguished alum of Canadian Mennonite University. He is the Migration and Resettlement Program Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Canada. He worked with leadership development and HIV/AIDS education among African Indigenous Churches in South Africa (1999–2005).

**Susan Kennel Harrison** (MDiv 1992) is Coordinator of Spiritual Care for the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County (Ontario) – Erie Shores Campus.

**Lee Pfahler** (MAPS 1992, MDiv 2013) is a staff chaplain at Goshen (Indiana)

Health, ministering primarily in the outpatient areas of Heart and Vascular Rehabilitation, the Center for Cancer Care, and Day Surgery.

**Eric Buller** (MDiv 1997) was a summer sabbatical pastor at Hope Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kansas, and is now serving as half-time Interim Pastor at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita.

**Elisabeth Kunjam** (MACF 2004) is on the Mennonite World Conference Deacons Commission, representing India.

**Jeremy Garber** (MDiv 2005) is the Academic Advising and Writing Center Coordinator at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, as well as an adjunct instructor in theology. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Iliff and the University of Denver in 2014. His book, *Another Way: Thinking Together About the Holy Spirit*, will be published by Wipf & Stock in 2019.

**Rachel Siemens** (MDiv 2007) began at Carman (Manitoba) Mennonite Church Nov. 1.

**Nekeisha Alayna Alexis** (MATS 2008) was a speaker at the first Indiana Animal Rights March Sept. 1 in Indianapolis.

**Barbara Devereaux** (MDiv 2010) was ordained for Christian ministry Nov. 25 at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Indiana. She serves Kern Road and Hudson Lake Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Indiana, when the pastors are away.

**Anna Ruth Hershberger** (MDiv 2012) served as Transitional Pastor at Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship in Elkhart, Indiana, until the end of 2018.

**Ken Quiring** (MDiv 1999), Pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon, Manitoba, and a member of the Network of Biblical Storytellers, gave a presentation on biblical storytelling and creation care stories and presented Scriptures for a number of the worship sessions during AMBS’s Rooted and Grounded Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship, Sept. 27–29, 2018. • **Credit:** Perdian Tumanan





**Leslie Homer-Cattell** (MDiv 2013) is Administrative Pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

**Katherine Goerzen** (MDiv 2015) and **Peter Goerzen** (MDiv 2015) authored a MennoMedia Bible study series, *Upside-Down Living: Parenting*.

**Gabriel Pennington** (MDiv 2016) was ordained Oct. 28 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church in Hydro, Oklahoma, where he serves as Associate Pastor.

**Asia Frye** (MDiv 2017) is Coordinator for Spiritual Life at McPherson (Kansas) College.

**Kristine Regehr** (MDiv 2017) is living in North Newton, Kansas, and serving as half-time Transitional Pastor at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kansas.

**Janette Lyndaker Gallagher** (MDiv 2018) began as Interim Pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning, New York, July 23.

**Mariah Martin** (MDiv 2018) was installed Nov. 4 as Pastor of Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Indiana.

Several AMBS alumni were presenters at the Nov. 8–10 Women Doing Theology Conference of Mennonite Church USA's Women in Leadership Project. The event was held at AMBS. **Malinda Elizabeth Berry** (MAPS 2000; faculty) was a keynote speaker, and workshop/paper presenters included **Dorothy Yoder Nyce** (MDiv 1981), **Janeen Bertsche Johnson** (MDiv 1989), **Jackie Wyse-Rhodes** (MDiv 2002), **Jean Kilheffer Hess** (MATS 2004), **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis**

(MATS 2008), **Joanne Gallardo** (MDiv 2010), **Sarah Thompson Nahar** (MDiv 2011) and **Bekah York** (MAPS 2018).

## DEATHS (dates are in 2018)

**Delbert J. Schrag** (BDiv 1952), 97, of Forest Grove, Oregon, Nov. 28.

**Milton Harder** (BDiv 1954), 93, of Goessel, Kansas, Jan. 30.

**Richard W. Yoder** (BTh 1956), 88, of Goshen, Indiana, Aug. 12.

**Frank Ward** (BDiv 1957), 89, of North Newton, Kansas, Sept. 28.

**J. Lester Graybill** (BDiv 1958), 86, of New Holland, Pennsylvania, April 27.

**Catherine Hernley Lundberg** (alum), 93, of Goshen, Indiana, July 19.

**Irvin. M. Detwiler** (alum), 86, of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, Nov. 16.

**Vernon P. Lohrentz** (BDiv 1960), 87, of North Newton, Kansas, Oct. 13.

**Peter J. Neufeld** (BDiv 1960), 89, of Hutchinson, Kansas, May 31.

**Paul Martin** (MDiv 1978), 97, of Lititz, Pennsylvania, Oct. 31.

**William Shumaker** (MDiv 1980), 87, of West Liberty, Ohio, Sept. 5.

**James A. Burkholder** (MDiv 1981), 84, of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, June 13.

**Alice Ruth Pannabecker Ramseyer** (MDiv 1985), 89, of Bluffton, Ohio, Nov. 5.

**Phil Thomas** (alum), 53, of Goshen, Indiana, Nov. 29.

**Irene Wiens** (MATS 1993), 77, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Aug. 22.

## RECOGNITION (cont'd. from p. 5)

Specifically, he named **Willard Swartley's** New Testament classes and **David Augsburgers's** family systems course, which he said had a “profound effect” on his life. Cynthia referenced the Bible classes as having expanded her understanding of how the Bible came to be and of how to read it.

The Neufeld Smiths also named the close community they found at AMBS. The K-Group they formed has met almost every year since their graduation.

“The AMBS student community supported and inspired me to learn and grow in so many ways as we shared and discussed and argued and worshiped and confessed our humanity to one another,” said Roger. “The experience of such a learning, worshiping, discipling, sharing community gave me a vision for what God’s reign might look like no matter what the situation or context.”

From 1988 to 2018, the Neufeld Smiths pastored at Southern Hills. Cynthia also taught worship and congregational arts at the former AMBS–Great Plains Extension in North Newton, Kansas (2000–11). Roger served on the boards of the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, Interfaith of Topeka and the Topeka Justice Unity Ministry Project. He also served on Western District Conference committees and as WDC moderator. The couple now leads a Mennonite Mission Network Service Adventure unit in Jackson, Mississippi.

“Our training at AMBS — in Bible study, theology, marriage/family systems, etc. — continues to serve us well in this new context,” said Cynthia, adding that her education and experience are also contributing to her work on the team that’s creating the new *Voices Together* hymnal.

• — Marlys Weaver-Stoesz

AMBS alumni (l. to r.) **Bock Ki Kim** (MDiv 2002), **SeongHan Kim** (MAPS 2005) and **SunJu Moon** (MDiv 2011) — speakers for the Korean Anabaptist Conference in South Korea in November 2018 — are pictured with **J. Ron Byler**, Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (at right). Bock Ki and his wife, **Sook Kyoung Park**, are planting a Mennonite church in Seoul; helping the Korea Anabaptist Center and Mennonite Church South Korea; and developing Anabaptist resources in Korean through ongoing translation, writing, presentations and workshops. SeongHan helps lead the Jesus Heart Church, and SunJu is director of the Korea Anabaptist Center. • Photo provided





## PRESIDENT'S WINDOW

SARA WENGER SHENK, ED.D.

## Reflecting on God-with-us across the globe

I recently received a comment about a colleague at AMBS that made me smile: “At an institution full of idealists, [your colleague] is refreshingly down to earth and pragmatic, while also showing again and again how much she cares.”

I’ve worked at a seminary for most of the last 24 years. I know people have a stereotype about seminaries as anything but a “down-to-earth” place. A caricature that unfortunately gets repeated is that seminaries are all about head knowledge and arguments about abstract doctrines. Sometimes folks are intimidated by the thought of coming to seminary, talking with faculty or meeting with a seminary president because they assume we live in some stratosphere of elitist knowledge that’s out of touch and impractical.

This is *so not* true about AMBS. Oh, I know that some seminaries and professors, mostly from previous generations, majored in ideas that seemed to have a life of their own — disconnected from the lives of real people. But what theological education is really about is reflecting precisely

on where God and human beings meet each other in our homes, churches, farm fields and city streets. Jesus Christ is God come to earth: God-with-us. There is no work more intriguing and mind-blowing than pondering, debating, studying and discerning how God has been with humankind throughout history, is with us now and will be with us forever.

And the wondrous work of theology now is that we can ponder how God is with us in an expanding array of globally diverse down-to-earth contexts. AMBS students currently represent 16 different countries. With online study platforms, AMBS is becoming a global Anabaptist seminary, meeting people where they are — in their own contexts and with their own wisdom about how God is with us in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Tanzania and the U.S. I can’t imagine any more exhilarating way to grow in faith and knowledge of God-with-us than to do so in the company of down-to-earth people from all tribes and nations. •

## UPCOMING OFFERINGS

### Anabaptist Short Course

Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology (online, noncredit)

Sept. 11 – Oct. 22, with **Jamie Pitts**, Ph.D.  
[ambs.edu/shortcourses](http://ambs.edu/shortcourses)

### Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

(see pp. 1–2)

[ambs.edu/journey](http://ambs.edu/journey)

### Spiritual Guidance Seminars

Prepare for a ministry of spiritual direction through this supervised program led by **Dan Schrock**, D.Min. In 2019–20, Spiritual Guidance Seminar will take place online and on campus. Advanced Spiritual Guidance Seminar will meet Oct. 7–8, 2019; Feb. 17–18 and May 4–5, 2020. [ambs.edu/seminars](http://ambs.edu/seminars)

### Visiting preacher and teacher

Invite AMBS Professor **David B. Miller**, D.Min., to teach or preach on topics such as Christian leadership, missional church, healthy boundaries, holistic witness and more. [ambs.edu/workshops](http://ambs.edu/workshops)

### “Reading the Bible with Jesus”

Host a workshop with itinerant Bible teacher **Bryan Moyer Suderman**, M.T.S., for 1–2 days of digging into one of the Gospels to gain tools for reading and interpreting Scripture like Jesus did, in light of today’s world. [ambs.edu/workshops](http://ambs.edu/workshops)

### !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth

!Explore gives students in grades 10–12 an opportunity to explore ministry and theology, grow in spiritual practices and biblical engagement and listen for God’s call. The program includes a 100-hour congregational internship and a Group Experience (July 9–25). Scholarships are available. Encourage someone you know to apply! [ambs.edu/explore](http://ambs.edu/explore)

### AMBS Intensive Term courses

**Hybrid courses** (online May 6 – July 19, with one week on campus: June 3–8) include Ethics and Care: Living and Dying with Purpose; Ethics and Practice of Forgiveness; and Christian Leadership in the 21st Century.

**Campus Session 1 courses** (May 6–23) include Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture; History of Christian Spirituality; Religion, Violence and Peacebuilding; and The Spirit World and the Global Church.

**Campus Session 2 courses** (June 10–27) include The Religious Other in the Bible; Performing the Faith; and Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence.

Nonadmitted students get 50 percent off their first course! Also, check out audit options for AMBS grads.

[ambs.edu/onecourse](http://ambs.edu/onecourse)

### Trail of Death: A Pilgrimage of Remembrance, Lament and Transformation

June 3–13. Participants in this pilgrimage will trace the route of the U.S. military’s forced removal of about 850 Potawatomi from their ancestral homeland in northern Indiana to present-day Osawatomi, Kansas, in 1838. [ambs.edu/trailofdeath](http://ambs.edu/trailofdeath)

### Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

(see p. 3)  
[ambs.edu/graduatecertificate](http://ambs.edu/graduatecertificate)